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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PAPD, EUR/PPA, EUR/CE, INR/EUC, INR/P,  
SECDEF FOR USDP/ISA/DSAA, DIA FOR DC-4A

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [GM](#) [US](#) [HO](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: G-20, UNGA, CHINA, HONDURAS, U.S.-TRAVEL,  
GERMANY;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Print media centered on the development of a new vaccine against HIV/AIDS and on the debate in the UN General Assembly, while Frankfurter Rundschau opened with the State Department's travel alert for U.S. travelers to Germany. Editorials focused on the meeting of the UN General Assembly, the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh and the upcoming Bundestag elections. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with the UN General Assembly's resolution on the abolition of nuclear weapons.

- [1](#)2. (Economic) G-20 Summit

All papers carried factual news reports on the beginning of the G-20 summit meeting in Pittsburgh. Sueddeutsche opened a report with a remark by Chancellor Merkel: "G-20 Summit is 'Decisive,'" while Die Welt headlined: "G-20 Summit Threatened to become Insignificant," arguing that the feeling of urgency has gone and that there is no pressure to approve regulations any more. Handelsblatt headlined "British Insist on G-20 to be New Global Government," and reported: "Britain's PM Gordon Brown several times said that he wanted to make the G-20 a kind of global economic government. His close aide Shriti Vadera was a key player in Brown's preparations for the London [G-20] summit at the beginning of April. To everyone's surprise she stepped down from her job as undersecretary for the economy. It will now be her main task to implement a framework agreement on 'sustainable and balanced growth.' With this move, Brown is now adding another controversial aspect to the tense

relations between the British and Americans the one side and German on the other side."

ZDF-TV (9/24) commented: "A year ago, the world looked into an abyss. The looming collapse of the global financial system made the governments all over the world join forces and take action. But this unanimity is over now. The reason is not only the U.S. and British governments but also Chancellor Merkel and Finance Minister Steinbrück's catalogue of demands they will present at the G-20 summit. Their list is oriented to the mood among the German voters rather than the goal of effectively regulating financial markets. The duo Merkel-Steinbrück is calling for effective control over financial products and markets, but why is the government not doing its homework by trying everything to protect customers from highly risky investments? There is no doubt that an international framework agreement must come. But by then, the German government should do its homework first."

Norddeutscher Rundfunk of Hamburg (9/24) broadcast the following commentary: "Symbols instead of strategies, repentance instead of rules. These will probably be the signals which the most powerful leaders in the world are likely to send to the world after the Pittsburgh G-20 summit. There is a great lack of agreement, even within the EU, let alone in the rest of the world. That is why the summit from Pittsburgh will leave the people feeling helpless rather than hopeful. The tactical moves of the German government must also be blamed for this."

Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/25) editorialized: "It was not the poor bonus rules that caused the greatest banking disaster of all times."

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The reason was the blind trust of many elites in the forces of the markets, a lack of regulations, and cheap money from the central banks - but primarily the knowledge of the boards of the banks that the state will help them in case of an emergency. To eliminate all these deficiencies is complicated, for at issue are capital requirements for banks, credit levers, and anti-cyclical reserves. Such terms are hardly conveyable to the public. That is why many G-20 leaders - and with them the media - prefer to turn to the issue of banker bonuses. This is certainly popular but it will not prevent the next crisis."

Financial Times Deutschland (9/25) argued: "Unlike what Chancellor Merkel wants to make us believe, it is more than an obvious red herring that Britain and the United States want to put the issue of global imbalances on the agenda of the G-20 summit. This is a genuine international problem and Germany is a big part of this problem. German critics argue that a global economy which lives on credit must collapse at some time in the future. But they do not mention that it is countries that are dependent on exports such as Germany or China which made possible the consumption craze of U.S. consumers, and that they profited from it. In order to avoid future crises, it is decisive to approve financial market regulations but also global trade imbalances."

Regional daily Nürnbberger Zeitung (9/25) judged: "Let us not fool ourselves: politicians always lag behind developments. They can only react to shortcomings while the financial sector is already exploring new possibilities to bypass looming sanctions. It is an advantage for the financial actors that politicians must always agree on the smallest common denominator. Especially the British and Americans - both economies are strongly dependent on a flourishing financial sector - are again throwing spanners into the works. In the end, the Pittsburgh summit will again produce grandiloquent declarations which no banker needs to fear. That is why the sad consequence of all this is that, following this crisis, we are facing the next one."

### 13. (UNGA) Reaction to Obama Speech, Iran

Sueddeutsche (9/25) noted in an editorial commentary: "This is the moment of truth in New York for Tehran, Washington and Moscow. President Obama has made Russia's dream come true and stopped the missile defense shield in Eastern Europe shortly prior to the UN General Assembly, where the Iranian nuclear program was marginally

discussed. America and Russia deny that both events have anything to do with each other, which now sounds fairly ridiculous, and can only be explained by the years of rhetorical armament. Admitting now that Moscow are doing each other a favor would be a loss of face, or even a sellout of national interests. In fact, we can only welcome it when Moscow is reaching out to Washington a little bit and exerting more pressure on Tehran.... Moscow's political capital in Tehran was fantastic compared with that of Washington. It is time to convert this capital into results. Russia has complained for years that the missile defense shield blocks good relations with America. Moscow can now prove that this was not just an excuse. America should examine this offer with due mistrust."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/25) opined: "We can assume that President Obama's utopia of a world without nuclear weapons is pursuing the goal of preventing the proliferation of such weapons.... The Russians may play the game for some time to increase the pressure on Iran. However, in the past, the Russian tactic was: one step forward, one step backward."

Die Welt (9/25) editorialized on its front page: "With a dramatic gesture, Barack Obama made an advance payment. Unlike his predecessors, he paid the UN the highest respect in an attempt to open a new chapter in the American policy on the UN and prove that

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the principle of dialogue is not a defensive one. By his moves, he wanted to get other countries, which tend to be rogue states, to also make a move. It remains to be seen whether this will happen. Looking at the history of the UN, this is an illusive hope. As if they wanted to prove this, Libya's dictator Qaddafi and Iranian President Ahmadinejad delivered aggressive and delirious speeches, indicating that they are not at all thinking to do justice to the honor of the house. Both of them showed that they continue to be willing to use the UN as a stage to polemicize against the West and to forge an anti-Semite and Anti-American alliance. The good thing is that the world is watching when these men make fools out of themselves."

Berliner Zeitung (9/25) editorialized: "Apart from a few exceptions, the leadership of the countries in the broader Middle East, including in Iran, is a catastrophe. Most leaders are senile, brutal, ignorant or dangerous. And some of them are all of that. The performance of Libya's leader Qaddafi in UN General Assembly can be described as bizarre, but not dangerous. However, Iranian President Ahmadinejad not only denied the Holocaust but also threatened Israel and indulged in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. More than seven decades ago, the Nazis made such thinking their ideology and acted accordingly by murdering millions of Jews and starting a world war. Ahmadinejad's speech is anti-Semitic and dangerous, particularly for Iran and his own people.... The speech will further isolate the country, preventing us from finding a reasonable solution for the nuclear conflict and provoking new sanctions."

Tageszeitung (9/25) commented: "The first days of the UN General Assembly was at best an unnecessary media spectacle. At worst, it has made resolving the world's most pressing problems more difficult. Given the bad experience with the unilateral and UN-hostile Bush administration, Obama's push for multilateral efforts and the renouncement of America's leadership role were good, but charisma alone does not suffice. Many UN members indeed desire the U.S. to play a constructive leadership role, particularly in conflicts like the Mideast, in which Washington has the tools to find a solution, and also in global challenges like climate change, in which the U.S is part of a problem."

#### 14. (China) Climate Protection Proposals

Under the headline: "Beijing's Hot Balloon," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (9/25) argued: "All of a sudden, China also wants to be a model in climate protection. China's President Hu Jintao had hardly finished in speech in New York, when he was effusively praised. But we should deflate this hot air balloon before we begin a factual discussion. Here are a few facts: first, China is globally the biggest producer of greenhouse gases; second, China is opposed to

binding reduction goals and Hu did not change this in New York; third, China's economy is rapidly growing and needs a lot of dirty coal for its energy supplies. This cannot be changed overnight because Hu discovered this issue so late. China as a model in environmental protection? If this is the case some time in the future, we would be delighted but currently it is too early to say this. It is good that environmental protection has become an issue in the Chinese leadership, but unfortunately, Hu did not mention concrete figures. We could at least call upon Hu to mention the year when China's emissions are to go down. But the fact that this remains open is disappointing shortly before the World Climate Conference in Copenhagen."

15. (Honduras) Power Struggle

According to die tageszeitung (9/25), "the economic elite is aware of the fact that it is not the European Union and the United States which are ruining the country (Honduras) by cutting their economic

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and military assistance. It is the elite itself that is the problem. The Organization of American States (OAS) should use the current situation for a new negotiating attempt. It has talked for too long with the clowns in the [political] arena. It must now go to the circus directors in the background. They know how to get rid of someone like Micheletti."

16. (U.S.) Travel Alert

Regional daily Ostsee-Zeitung of Rostock (9/25) editorialized: "The fact that Germany is in the crosshair of terrorists is not really new. The thwarted attempts of the 'suitcase bombers' and the Sauerland terrorist group have made clear that [the terror alert] is not mere talk. But the danger lurks in the neighborhood. We must take the risk seriously. Still, the U.S. travel alert for trips to Germany is irresponsible. There are no real indications of a special or new threat towards Americans. They are safer here than they would be in many cities at home. That is why [such travel alerts] do serious security analyses a disservice because the limits between a genuine and an alleged terror danger will be blurred."

Under the headline: "Among Friends," Frankfurter Rundschau (9/25) opined: "It would be careless to consider the travel alert a kind of pearl on a chain of evidence according to which a terror threat is imminent in Germany and that the United States, not the German government, is warning its citizens against such a threat.. No, such alerts are not unusual on the international stage. But unlike the German government, which rarely issues such alerts, the State Department wants to be on the safe side. For the U.S. laws would allow possible victims to demand compensation from the government. In the current travel alert for Germany, it is said that there is the danger of being accosted by skinheads or rowdies or to get involved in brawls in Germany. One may add that this danger is currently very high at the Oktoberfest in Munich. We should not minimize the terror threat but we should not overestimate it either."

17. (Germany) Bundestag Elections/Afghanistan

Deutschlandfunk radio (9/24) remarked on the foreign policy of the grand coalition: "Concerning the foreign policy of the grand coalition, Chancellor Merkel has made clear from the start that she is the boss. Foreign Minister Steinmeier had to leave the red carpet to her again and again, while he was doing the tough work in the Foreign Ministry.... Germany remained a reliable partner in the EU, NATO and UN and did its bit as a medium-sized power in international crises. However, some things went wrong: Merkel's opposition to presidential candidate Obama's speech at the Brandenburg Gate and the request to take Guantanamo detainees has not been forgotten in Washington.... In Afghanistan, the German government played the role of the headmaster and told NATO partners to take a 'comprehensive approach'... Although the German contingent has grown, the security situation deteriorated and the Bundeswehr is increasingly involved in fights for which it is inappropriately armed. The German government has also failed to train [Afghan] police forces."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (9/25) editorialized on its front page: "For a short time, the topic of Afghanistan seemed to get the significance in the election campaign that the mission of thousands of German soldiers would deserve. However, German election campaigners of most parties, particularly those of the coalition government, have quickly turned away from the topic again because Germany's partners candidly call the mission a war and because it is unpopular. The Left Party is an exception, which popularly but irresponsibly calls for an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan....

The assessment of the most senior American commander in Afghanistan made clear what the new German government will have to do....

General McChrystal demands more troops, more trainers, more aid

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workers - in short, more resources - to defeat the Taliban and improve the situation of the Afghans.... A defeat would have grave consequences for NATO and the security of its members. Fighting separately and losing together - this is the disastrous outlook. We cannot go on like this. The costs are too high. However, the current engagement does not help us reach our goals."

Handelsblatt (9/25) editorialized on its front page: "Never before was there such a rift between the uncertainty of the electoral outcome and the clear necessity of what the future policy will look like. The rivals and voters know that the next German government faces an agenda that requires tougher decisions than that of the last grand coalition. The dimension of the program will push aside any party politics."

MURPHY